



NAVA THIURUPATHI – PILGRIMES TOURIST PLACES IN THOOTHUKUDI DISTRICT

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Abstract

A pilgrimage is a ritual journey for peace, attaining mukthi, visiting heritage sites. Every step along the way has meaning. A pilgrimage is a journey during which transformation takes place. Pilgrims will get new insights and deeper understanding. Life is seen with different eyes on completion of the pilgrimage. Pilgrimage tourism has spiritual significance. Pilgrimage tourism comes under Religious tourism as one of the segments. The other segments are missionary travel, faith based cruising, monastery visits and religious tourist attractions. The Nava Tirupathi is literally 9 temples from the 108 Divya Desams. These temples are mentioned by Nammazhvar in the Nallayiram Divya Prabhandhams. These nine temples are situated near the banks of river Thamirabharani. Each temple represents a Navagraha. In these Vishnu temples, the Prime Deities themselves are worshipped as the Navagrahaas and so there are no separate shrines for the navagrahaas, as found in other temples. It is said that offering of worship to these deities alleviate the malignant influences of the navagrahaas that come about during one's lifetime.

Keywords: Religious tourism, Navathirupathi, Divyadesam.

Introduction

Religious tourism also called faith tourism is a type of tourism, where people travel individually or in groups for pilgrimage, missionary or leisure purposes. Religion is historically associated with tourism. Some of our popular destinations are founded in Thoothukudi district. Thoothukudi District is located in the extreme southern part of Tamil Nadu. The district is located between 0.8 and 45 of the northern latitude and 78 and 11 of the eastern longitudes. The district is roughly triangular in shape and is bounded by Virudhunagar and Ramanathapuram districts in the north, Gulf of Mannar in the east and Tirunelveli District in south and west. The major basin is Thamirabarani River and it passes through the district. It is gifted with rich cultural heritage, splendid geographical location and wide variety of flora and fauna which makes it one of the finest destinations in south India.

Nava Tirupathi

Nava Tirupathi is the combined name for nine temples dedicated to Lord Vishnu, located on the banks of Thamiraparani River in Thoothukudi District. The nine temples lie on the main Tiruchendur – Tirunelveli road and are within a radius of 12 kilometers. All the Nava Tirupati temples are Divya Desams (part of the 108 temples of Vishnu). The nine temples are also associated with the nine planets or Navagrahas.

1. Kallapiran Temple - Surya or Sun God

Kallapiran Temple, also known as Sri Vaikuntanatha Swamy temple, is dedicated to Lord Vishnu and is located at Srivaikuntam in Thoothukudi district. It is one of the Navathirupathi Temple and one among 108 Divya Desams. This is the first Nava Tirupathi temple and is associated with Sun (Navagraha Surya). There is no separate Navagraha Murti in the temple. The main deity represents the Navagraha. The main murti of Vishnu worshipped in the temple faces east and is in standing posture with Adi Sesa forming a canopy over his head.

Moolavar is known as Sri Vaikuntanatha Swamy and Urchavar is known as Sri Kallapiran. Consorts of Vishnu worshipped here are Vaikuntanayaki and Chornathanayaki. The sacred temple pond is known as Bhrigu Tirtha. The shrine is noted for its carved pillars and sculptures of Yalis and animals. There is also a nine tier rajagopuram. Sun rays fall on the Murti on the sixth day of Tamil Month Chithirai (April – May). Those having

problems in life due to the bad positioning of Surya in their horoscope will get relief after offering prayers here.

2. Vijaysanar Perumal Temple - Chandra or Moon God

Natham Vishnu Temple, also known as VijaysanarPerumal Temple or Varagunamangai, is dedicated to Lord Vishnu and is located at Natham. It is one of the Nava Tirupati temples and one among 108 DivyaDesams. This is the second Nava Tirupathi temple and is associated with Moon (Navagraha Chandra). There is no separate Navagraha ChandraMurti in the temple. The main deity represents the Navagraha. The main murti of Vishnu worshiped in the temple faces east and is in sitting posture with one leg folded and the other feet on the ground. Adi Sesha forms a canopy over the head of Lord Vishnu. Moolavar is known as Vijayasanar or Paramapatha Nathan.

Urchavar is known as EmmidarKadivan. Consorts of Vishnu worshipped here are Varagunavalli and Varagunamangai. The sacred temple pond is known as Agni Tirtha and Deva Pushkarini. The shrine is noted for its carved pillars and sculptures. There is also a five-tier rajagopuram. Those having problems in life due to the bad positioning of Chandra in their horoscope will get relief after offering prayers here.

3. Sri Vaithamanidhi Perumal Temple - Chevvai or Mars God

Sri VaithamanidhiPerumal Temple is dedicated to Lord Vishnu and is located at Tirukolur. It is one of the Nava Tirupati temples and one among 108 DivyaDesams. This is the third Nava Tirupathi temple and is associated with Mars (NavagrahaChevvai or Chowa or Mangal). There is no separate NavagrahaChevvaiMurti in the temple. The main deity represents the Navagraha. The main murti of Vishnu worshipped in the temple faces east and is in BhujangaSayanam or in reclining position. AdiSesha forms a canopy over the head of Lord Vishnu. Moolavar is known as VaithamanidhiPerumal. Urchavar is known as NikshobaVithan. Consorts of Vishnu worshipped here is KumudaValliNayaki and KolarValliNayaki. The sacred temple pond is known as KuberaTeertham. Those having problems in life due to the bad positioning of Chevvai or Mangal in their horoscope will get relief after offering prayers here.

4. Sri Bhoomipalar Temple - Budhan or Mercury God

Thirupuliangudi Permul Temple, also known as Sri Bhoomipalar Temple, is dedicated to Lord Vishnu and is located at Thirupuliangudi in the district of Thoothukudi in Tamil Nadu. It is one of the Nava Tirupati temples and one among 108 Divya Desams. This is the fourth Nava Tirupathi temple and is associated with Mercury (Navagraha Budha). There is no separate Navagraha Budha Murti in the temple. The main deity represents the Navagraha. The main murti of Vishnu worshipped in the temple faces east and is in Bhujanga Sayanam or in reclining position.

Moolavar is known as Bhoomipalar. Urchavar is known as Kasini Venthari. One can have darshan of the feet of the murti through a small opening when doing pradakshina, or circling, of the sanctum sanctorum. A lotus from the navel of reclining Bhagavan Vishnu goes up and joins a lotus flower sculpted on the wall. Lord Brahma sits atop the Lotus flower. Consorts of Vishnu worshipped here are Pulingudivalli, Malarmagal Naachiyar and Poomagal Nachiyar. The sacred temple pond is known as Varuna Teertham and Nirudhi Teertham. Those having problems in life due to the bad positioning of Budha or Mercury in their horoscope will get relief after offering prayers here.

5. Alwarthirunagari Temple- Guru or Jupiter God

Alwarthirunagari Temple, also known as Athinatha Alwar Temple, or Alwarthirunagari Permul Temple, is dedicated to Lord Vishnu. It is one of the Nava Tirupati temples and one among 108 Divya Desams. This is the fifth Nava Tirupathi temple and is associated with Jupiter (Navagraha Guru or Brihaspati). The place is mentioned in the Brahmananda Purana and it is believed to be the birthplace of Nammalvar. Lord Vishnu is worshipped here as Aathinathan or Aathipiran. The Swamyabhumurti of Vishnu faces east and is in standing posture. The feet of the murti are buried under earth. Goddess Lakshmi and Bhudevi are worshipped here as Aathinathanayaki and Thirukkurukornayaki. The shrine is located on the banks of Thamiraparani River. The sacred water body in the temple is known as Brahma Theertham. The sacred tree associated with the shrine is Tamarind Tree. Those having problems in life due to the bad positioning of Brihaspati or Guru in their life will get relief after offering prayers here.

Alwarthirunagari Temple and Varaha Kshetra

The temple is also known as VarahaKshetra as it is believed that Vishnu gave darshan to his ardent devotees here in the form of Varaha – with Bhudevi in his lap. The most important festival in the temple is observed in the Vaikasi Month (May – June). Murtis from Nine Nava Tirupati temples assemble in one location during the festival.

6. Makaranetunkuzhaikkadar Temple – Shukra God

Makaranetunkuzhaikkadar Temple, also known as NigarilMugilvannan or MakaraNedunKuzhaikathan, is dedicated to Lord Vishnu. It is one of the Nava Tirupati temples and one among 108 DivyaDesams. This is the sixth Nava Tirupathi temple and is associated with NavagrahaShukra.

7. Perungulam Mayakoothar Temple - Shani or Saturn God

PerungulamMayakoothar Temple, also known as Sri Venkatavanan temple or MayakoothanPerumalKoil, is dedicated to Lord Vishnu and is located at Perungulam in Thoothukudi in Tamil Nadu. It is one of the Nava Tirupati temples and one among 108 DivyaDesams. This is the seventh Nava Tirupathi Temple and is associated with Saturn (NavagrahaShani). Perungulam Mayakoothar Temple is around 8 km from Srivaikuntam. There is no separate NavagrahaShaniMurti in the temple. The main deity represents the Navagraha. The main murti of Vishnu worshipped in the temple faces east and is in standing posture. Moolavar is known as Venkatavanan and Srinivasan.

Urchar is known as Mayakoothar or Mayakoothan. A unique aspect here is that a separate Garuda murti is worshipped in the sanctum sanctorum. Consorts of Vishnu worshipped here are AlarmelmangaThayar, KulandaivalliThayar (also known as Kamala Valli). The sacred temple pond is known as PerungulaTeertham. Those having problems in life due to the bad positioning of ShaniBhagavan or Saturn in their horoscope will get relief after offering prayers here. The shrine is noted for its carved pillars and sculptures of Yalis and animals.

8.Devapiran Temple at Tolaivilimangalam - Raghu God

Devapiran Temple, also known as Thirutholaivillimangalam Sri Srinivasan Temple or ErattaiTirupati, is dedicated to Lord Vishnu. It is one of the Nava Tirupati Temples and one among 108 DivyaDesams. This is the eighth Nava Tirupathi temple and is associated with Navagraha Raghu or Rahu. The shrine is located 10 km east of Sri Vaikuntam. The place is mentioned by Nammalvar and is known as ErattaiTirupati because there are two temples located here. Lord Vishnu is worshipped here as Srinivasan. The murti faces east and is in standing posture. Urchavar is known as Devapiran. Consorts of Vishnu worshipped here are AlarmelmangaThayaar and PadmavatiThayaar.

9.Aravindalochanar Temple - Ketu God

Aravindalochanar Temple, also known as ThirutholaivillimangalamAravindaLosanar Temple or ErattaiTirupati, is dedicated to Lord Vishnu. It is one of the Nava Tirupati Temples and one among 108 DivyaDesams. This is the ninth Nava Tirupathi Temple and is associated with NavagrahaKetu. The shrine is located 10 km east of Sri Vaikuntam. The place is mentioned by Nammalvar and is known as ErattaiTirupati because there are two temples located here.

Conclusion

Religious tourism also called pilgrim tourism. Tourism play very significant role to generate socio, economic understanding among the peoples. Nava Thirupathi is a set of nine hindu temple dedicated to lord Vishnu. All these nine temples are classified as "DivyaDesams". Navathirupathi is a complete religious destination. Religious tourist who have travel to that place expressed it is a unique experience. Every person is must visit travel destination that you can enjoy with your entire family.

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